

Good morning colleagues & trustees:

I write to update you on progress the Executive Team has made regarding developing a plan for responding to the Employee Focus Group report. We have begun with a review of the report, our BBCC Strategic Plan, and data from onboarding and exit interviews. Here is what we have concluded so far:

Our strategic plan states in relevant part, "Big Bend Community College (BBCC) seeks to create a safe and dynamic culture where all employees are supported, engaged, and valued from recruitment to retirement as they serve the college and the local community." The information in the report indicates that for some BBCC employees, we are not meeting our own expectation expressed in the strategic plan. If we accept that our strategic plan is our desired outcome, we then need to determine how we will measure or determine our success in meeting that outcome.

Comparing information in the Employee Focus Group report with data from onboarding and exit interviews, we conclude that considerable correlation among themes common to all data sources exists. In short, we cannot continue to do business as we have been doing it. What follows is an outline of themes (in alphabetical order) and thoughts about possible next steps.

Accountability – We lack structure/stability for employees in the areas of orientation, onboarding, clear job descriptions/expectations, and performance management. Employees, including leaders, should be held accountable to rules/standards.

Communication – We must do a better job of helping employees understand how decisions are made, what is expected (recommendations, decisions, input, etc.) of employees, getting input before decisions are made, following up after decisions are made, and regular communication on standard topics such as budget, legislation, etc.

Community – We need to create a better sense of community on campus between departments and faculty/staff. We must help employees, especially new employees, make connections and create positive working relationships. We must also address a lack of trust between groups of employees and between leaders and employees.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion – Tension around diversity, equity, and inclusion continues to exist. We must provide more opportunities for "safe" discussion and training for all employees. We need to clarify leadership's and employees' expectations in this area.

Leadership Development – We must provide equitable, ongoing opportunities for professional development for all employees. BBCC needs to clearly define expectations for leaders/supervisors at BBCC regarding what type of environment/culture we expect supervisors to create for their direct-reports.

Value/Recognition – Our current methods of recognition are not meeting the needs of employees, and not all employees are included. We must address the high levels of frustration, stress, and concern in this area that exist among our employees. For example, frustration exists regarding hiring processes, especially around treatment of internal applicants.

Voice – A serious issue exists regarding whose voices are heard and whose are not heard. We must analyze how we invite or include voices/perspectives to ensure we are inclusive. We also need effective strategies with which to follow-up or “close the loop,” so employees know their perspectives mattered or were considered.

By no means is this list exhaustive. For example, other themes that emerged but lacked specifics to formulate any conclusions at this time include managing change and understanding and using data. You may have identified items in the report that are not listed above. If so, please share them with me or any member of the Executive Team.

As we reviewed the list, members of the Executive Team agreed that we need to discuss these themes/issues with the BBCC Cabinet for advice regarding how to proceed. Given the complexity and magnitude of the themes/issues identified, none of us feels equipped to facilitate a reconciliation process for the entire college. We may have to seek assistance from an outside party who specializes in this type of work.

Personally, I am struggling to find solutions. My primary focus is to help Big Bend heal, but I cannot do that alone. I need each of you to participate actively when possible and appropriate, so we collectively achieve the desired outcome as stated in our BBCC Strategic Plan.